

# **EXHIBIT 1**

**College of Arts and Sciences  
Post Tenure Review  
Dr. Barry Mehler**

**Annual Activity Report  
May 15, 2015 through May 15, 2020.**

**1. Barry Mehler: Department of Humanities**

**2. Time Frame: May 15, 2015 through May 15, 2020.**

**3. Classes Taught:**

History 251: Science and Racism  
History 257: History of Terrorism  
History 230: Michigan History  
History 121: American History Survey to 1877  
History 122: American History Survey from 1877  
History 251: Science and Racism  
History 276: History of Science and Technology  
History 280: History of Medicine and Health Care  
History 277: History of American Business  
History 361: Genocide in the Modern World  
History 342: The Civil War and Reconstruction  
History 372: The Middle East in the Modern Era  
History 375: Latin America in the Modern World

**4. Other Workload or Stipend Assignments:**

Since 2015 I have been involved in the creation of the Shoah: Comparative Genocide Project. I helped negotiate the original grant for our lifetime subscription to the Shoah Archives. From 2016-2019, I have been given either half-time or quarter-time release for this work. I have also been paid stipends for the summer of 2017 and the summer of 2018. During this time, I organized the ran a summer training program for our faculty and a week-long Shoah rollout (9/11/17-9/14/17). I also organized a three semester FLTC Shoah program to train faculty in the use of the Archive and help develop curricula across disciplines. In the Spring of 2019, I organized a second FLTC group which is currently in its second semester. I will include documentation on these activities with this report.

**5. Advising:**

My activities have not involved advising students other than the normal advising that any professor gives students during office hours or in class. I believe I was still advising students interested in or registered for our History Minor in 2015, but I think I was relieved of those duties by the Fall of 2016.

**6. Ferris or Professionally Related Service:**

I am the faculty advisor for the Students for a Sensible Drug Policy. While I am not the official faculty advisor for the Phi Alpha Theta/Club History, I have been an active supporter of the group, attending meetings often and helping our students prepare for the regional PAT Conferences. I have traveled with our students for all of their regional conferences and I've been active in organizing the regional conferences which have been held here at Ferris.

**7. Curriculum Innovations:**

I developed a highly original teaching method, described in detail in my last PTR. I will include my description of "The Show" in the appendix to this report. I have modified my presentation method since taking on the Shoah project. It was my feeling that the vulgar and ironic tone of "The Show" was not compatible with the Shoah program. I couldn't run the Shoah and treat the past as a vulgar joke that had no meaning. Something more subtle was called for. Thus, after spending over a decade developing and refining a very unique teaching method, that I loved and students clearly enjoyed. I stripped away the musical introduction, the advertisements for Camel cigarettes and the vulgarity. What I was left with were the core ideas behind my pedagogy.

The basics of my approach have not changed. I reject the notion that education has to have instrumental value that can be measured. In the world of the Yeshiva, one studies Torah for its own sake, not for any value it imparts. We didn't study the Talmud to enter a profession or to acquire skills. We studied Torah "for its own sake." The famous Voloshin Yeshiva in Lithuania was uninterested in how brilliant a student was or how much they learned. All they were interested in was that the student was engaged. It was the act, not the outcome that counted. If a student was found playing cards or any other indication of laziness or disinterest, they would be immediately expelled. But they saw no difference between the slow student and the brilliant student and there was no need to measure their progress. Progress was not the goal. This was a lifelong endeavor; whose value was not in any way instrumental. It wasn't a tool; it was an end in itself.

In modern intellectual spheres, Franz Kafka and Walter Benjamin come closest to a non-instrumental approach to reality. I don't believe my impact on students can be measured in any meaningful way. The idea that I should be required to show

"measurable learning outcomes" is fundamentally at odds with how I see what I do. My focus in all my classes, regardless of the method I use, is on "thinking" rather than "learning." While this might well have some instrumental value, it isn't what I am about, which is why I have so much difficulty with the insistence on measurable outcomes. This notion is anathema to my orientation.

My view of history is best summed up by Walter Benjamin's "Angel of History:"  
"A Klee painting named 'Angelus Novus' shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet.

#### **8. Professional Development, Scholarship, and Creative Activity:**

In 2016, I joined the Academic Engagement Network, an organization of over 450 faculty, administrators and staff members on 175 university and college campuses across the United States. They were organized to oppose the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, affirming instead, academic freedom and freedom of expression in the university community. Their goal is to promote robust discussion of Israel on campus. I attended their second national conference held in Chicago in May 2017 and their third national conference in May 2018. As a result of my participation, I was able to secure a \$1000 grant to bring Professor Yael Aronoff, Director of the Jewish Studies Program at MSU and author of "The Political Psychology of Israeli Prime Ministers: When Hard-Liners Opt for Peace," (2014, Cambridge University Press) to campus for our 11:00 hour. Professor Aronoff met with faculty and administrators for lunch and with our Honors Students after lunch.

In the Summer of 2017, I organized the Summer Shoah Training Institute from May 22-23. This two-day summer training institute included presentations by SJ Cransnow and Martha Stroud from the USC Shoah Foundation. The Training Institute also included, Professor Kenneth Waltzer, Emeritus Professor of History and Jewish Studies and Dean of the James Madison College at MSU. Also from MSU we brought Deborah Margolis, MSU Jewish Studies Librarian. Professor Henry Greenspan, author of "Listening to Holocaust Survivors" (2010) presented "Engaging Testimony as a Verb: Motives, Contexts, and Process in Retelling. My brother, Peter Mehler also presented on "Living with Survivors."

In the Fall of 2017, I organized the formal rollout of the Ferris State University Shoah Studies Program, which I kicked off with a demonstration of the Shoah Archives. My brother came back for a repeat performance of his presentation on

"Living with Survivors" and Henry Greenspan performed his award winning one man to a packed audience in BUS 111.

In the Fall of 2017, I began a Faculty Learning Community with some 20 faculty, staff and administrators. The focus of the group was to explore ways to use the Archives in different programs. This first three semester FLTC group finished its work in the Fall of 2018 and we began a second cohort in the Spring of 2018. That group is still in process. In October 2017, I helped organize a Harvest Week Festival centered around the Jewish harvest festival of Sukkot, the Native American Harvest Moon Ceremony, led by Scott Herron of our Circle of Tribal Nations and the Chinese Students Organization in a demonstration of three different harvest festivals.

In the Spring of 2018, I introduced my new course, "Shoah: Comparative Genocide in the Twentieth Century. We also ran a half day training session for our librarians with Deborah Margolis. I also arranged to bring Henry Greenspan back to campus March 17<sup>th</sup> as the Keynote speaker for the History Honors Society Regional Conference, which I believe was the third regional conference we organized. Our students hosted a round table on the use of the Shoah Archives at that conference.

#### **9. Other Relevant Information:**

In May 2019, The Guardian published, "Why Race Science is on the Rise Again," by Angela Saini. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/may/18/race-science-on-the-rise-angela-saini>. The article began:

"In 1985, historian Barry Mehler had a dream. His research was taking him deep into the murky territory of academia's extreme right wing. As he worked, he found his waking life beginning to soak into his subconscious, colouring his sleep. In his dream, his son, then two years old, was trapped in a runaway car hurtling down a hill. "The traffic is going in both directions, and I am in the middle of the road desperately waving my hands trying to stop the flow, in order to save the life of my son," he tells me. "It's a metaphor for how I felt."

Mehler had been looking into what happened after the second world war to scientists who, during the conflict, had collaborated with the Nazis, were eugenicists or shared their racial worldview. "I was really focused on the ideological continuity between the old and the new," he says. He learned that the fear of some kind of threat to the "white race" was still alive in some intellectual circles, and that there was a well-coordinated network of people who were attempting to bring these ideologies back into mainstream academia and politics.

Mehler, who is Jewish, understandably found all this disturbing. He immediately saw parallels between the far-right network of intellectuals and the rapid, devastating way in which eugenics research had been used in Nazi Germany, terrifying him with the possibility that the brutal atrocities of the past could happen once more. It was impossible not to imagine that the ideological heart behind them was still beating. "I felt like I was desperately trying to prevent this from happening again," he says. "I thought that we were headed for more genocide." His voice betrays an anxiety that political stability in even the strongest democracies sits on a precipice."

This article was a preview of her new book, *Superior: The Return of Race Science* (Boston: Beacon Press 2019). Chapter 5, deals with my work from the 1980s and 1990s. Thus, I have gone from writing about the history of eugenics to being a part of that history.

According to the Google Citation Index my work has been cited nearly 900 times, 228 times since 2014.